



The Marlborough Oracle

May, 2016

Written for the students, by the students

Black Wednesday

Bly Wilding recalls an enjoyable trip to the Fortune

On 27th of April a group of Year 9 students 'visited the Fortune Theatre watch a production of The Woman in Black'. Amazingly the production has been playing to audiences since 1989 and has proven to be one of the West End classics.

Whispers about the terror of the production and the fear it would instil in the audience had echoed around the school corridor. Consequently, the Year 9s arrived promptly and eagerly boarded the waiting coach so as to begin their voyage to Eel Marsh house and all the dread that comes with it.

Covent Garden is not only home to the Fortune Theatre but to a postcode of bright lights, decadent stalls and live street artists. In one corner of Covent Garden a street artist caught the eye of our year group and we swarmed around him. We were captivated. Once our eyes had drunk in the act we made our back to the Fortune to join the play's protagonist, Arthur Kipps, in the early 1900s.

Once inside the theatre the students found their allocated seat. Then the lights dimmed and the curtain rose. Silence descended. Surprisingly, the play was performed by just two actors - and of course, the woman in black. Narrative twists that kept us on the edge of our seats and on more than one occasion the features of the gothic genre frightened more than one student on more than one occasion.

The students united in their reviews: it was fabulous! Many said how they had never having experienced the theatre before and thoroughly enjoyed it.

A word from our Heads of School

This year we have five Heads of School; last month we spoke to three of them about their hopes and plans for the future. This month we talk to Eli and Jess about their roles.

Eli Rees

Eli was keen to share his reasons for wanting to become Head of School. It seems that the change is something that really inspires him and the role of Head of School allows him the "perfect platform" for making people aware of all the new wonderful things that happen in the school

He admitted that whilst we might have said public speaking Eli admitted to having quite "a good knack for not getting nervous", even admitting that the attention was always nice. What surprised us was that he was a little intimidated by Ms Thomson – but he asked us not to tell her!

Jess Broekman

Jess was pleased to tell us all about why she wanted to become part of the Heads of School team. When we spoke with her she told us how she felt that the school and all of the staff had done so much for her and had supported all her choices and that she really wanted to "give something back to the school". She excitedly told us how she was keen to learn new communication skills and be a supporting voice for all the students and that she hoped students would feel comfortable speaking to her if they had any problems or concerns.

Finally, good luck to everybody as you approach the Summer term. If you have exams try not to worry too much – breath and take each day as it comes. You'll be fabulous, and when the summer does come, have a great one!



Festival Essentials

Written for the students, by the students

Mud, sun, rain and more mud... What type of festival essentials do you need?

With the festival season soon upon us we thought that it would be a good idea to look at some of the festival essentials. Firstly, our best advice would be to sit with your friends over lunch and make a list of the essentials and divide it between who's going. Ideally you need to decide what do you really need to bring? You ought to remember that there are some wonderful stalls at all of the summer festivals; inevitably you are going to find yourself carrying home more than you came with! I guess what we are saying is pack light – you'll have to carry everything a long way.

If you have never been to a festival you might think that it is all skinny denim shorts and wellies... it isn't – you aren't expected to look all fancy and glamorous. Be assured that even though there are a gazillion bands playing on umpteen different stages, you might not be able to hear them, you might not even be able to see and you might even miss them entirely. You have to make your peace with that. If you're only going for the music then record it on BBC4! However, once you've expected this you can get on with enjoying the food, the different fields, the vast and varied people and you can soak up every inch of culture.

Festivals are wonderful. Music. Lights. Laughter. Friends. Dancing... but you must stay safe. You know the rules: keep hydrated; keep protected from the sun; know where the police and security are; be aware of where your friends are; always stay with at least one person you know and trust and without sounding too much like mum, stay in touch with Mum!



Here's what we think you really can't do without:

A charged mobile and if you have it a wind up or recharged battery.

Programme, Directions, Tickets, ID
Waterproofs and a hoody.

Sun cream and a bottle of after sun.

Tinted moisturiser (with SPF) and an all in one cream blush.

Water bottle.

Wellies, thick socks and clean underwear.

Snacks – think things that don't melt.

Flip Flops and summer hat.

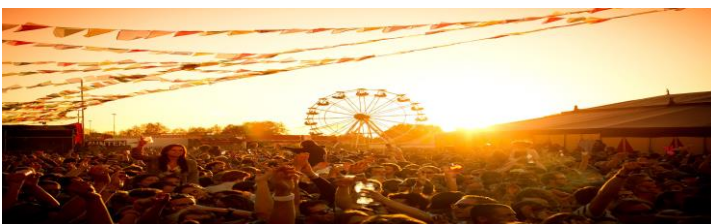
Cash – not too much (a Visa gift card is always a good option).

Tent and basic camping equipment – sleeping bag, mat, mug, sporks, head torch and a plate.

Medicine and personal items- glasses, sunglasses, toothbrush, dry shampoo and a bottle of salt-spray.

Face wipes and hand sanitizer.

Plastic bags for rubbish storage, to house your dirty clothes, or for something to sit on!



How to relieve some of the stress

Written for the students, by the students

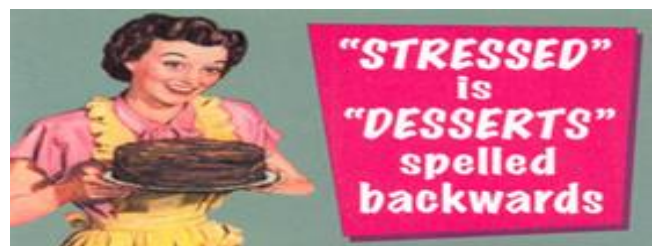
As exam season has arrived, I feel it necessary to discuss ways of dealing with the subsequent stress that accompanies exams. I mean, let's face it, exams are awful, and anyone who claims that they are either lying, or an elite sub-species of human! While I believe there is no way to actually successfully erase stress, despite what so called "stress workshops" preach, I do believe that there are ways to refocus your energy in order to avoid breakdown.

I am aware that grades are not the 'be -all and end-all', but that's not to say that I don't care about what I get on results day. I want to do well. I work hard to do well. Consequently the determination to do well can be exhausting. As a work fiend I am reluctant to admit that it is absolutely necessary to take breaks. I don't just mean taking a 20-minute break for each hour spent revising, I mean accepting that you might need to take the time to do something else entirely. I admit that for some this could simply be method of procrastination, and therefore complete avoidance – which I do not advocate.

It seems daunting to take an hour or two out to do something enjoyable; there's a little voice that echoes "that's the time I should be revising; this time will make the difference between these two grades..." I won't argue that it isn't but I can guarantee that after you've been staring at notes and text books for consecutive days, you will reach a new level of stress that will leave you shattered. A break will definitely be required.

For me, I take time out to bake. I've always been a stress baker and have always loved it. Mainly, it's the time spent creaming butter and sugar, kneading, weighing, chopping and waiting... not to mention the joy I get from giving something to others that will make them happy; I mean what's better than beating those Monday blues than a gooey homemade cookie?

Another way to relax is exercise. I started going for daily runs during the Easter before my GCSE exams and found that it was extremely beneficial. Two years later and it's still one of my go-to ways to de-stress, especially at this time of the year. I'm not going to start preaching about all the health benefits of exercise, nor the scientific research regarding endorphins or whatever, but I will definitely recommend some sort of exercise during a period of such stress. I know by this point everyone is exhausted so exercise may not be something you want to be doing, especially if you're thinking "we don't even have enough energy to smile let alone go for a run!" which is a point well made, but even going to the park, seeing friends for half an hour, or to just sitting and enjoy the fresh air will help. As cliché as it sounds, it's true.



How to relieve some of the stress

Written for the students, by the students

Again, that might not be your preference, so maybe take some time to read or watch a film/ TV show. I know how tempting it is to sit and binge watch Netflix in your pyjamas, especially if you're like me. If this is the case then I strongly recommend **not** starting a new TV show, watch something you've seen countless times. But do not, and I mean do not, under any circumstances start watching new box sets before your exams. Nevertheless, my point remains, watch anything that allows you to turn your brain off for an episode, if that's what you need. Taking some time out and focusing can be like the equivalent of a fuzzy blanket, or a warm crumble and custard on a rainy November day. Obviously, I'm only talking from my own experience, and everyone has different ways of dealing with stress. Of course I'm not suggesting you should ever give up on revision; revision is essential for success (unless of course you're that sub-human I referred to earlier). What you do need to recognise is that you're not a Marvel hero. So, although the stress isn't going to disappear, and breaks may not be a magic fix for living with it either, at least they'll stop you from going out of your mind.

Unless you surround yourself with Tibetan monks, chances are, you'd be hard-pressed to find someone— including you — that wouldn't say they're stressed about something. However, do you know the signs and symptoms of stress?

What is stress?

To put it simply, stress is a state of mental or emotional strain or tension caused by circumstances that are often out of your control.

How do I know if I am stressed?

The symptoms of stress are vast and can range from constantly “not feeling yourself”, be it sore throats or fatigue, losing your temper or crying over something that you'd normally shrug off. Stress might cause you to suffer from more spots than usual or you might even experience insomnia. The fact is this: stress shows itself differently in different people.

How can I cope with stress?

If you think you are suffering from stress take action! Talk to somebody about ways that work: small achievable to do lists; eat and drink well; break up your study time and complete one exercise at a time; test yourself regularly; turn headings in to questions... and try not to let other people panic you.



Not so *Marvellous*?

Written for the students, by the students

Captain America: Civil War –Former editor, Zoe Gibbs, returns to review.

After the major hype surrounding *The Avengers: Age of Ultron* and the subsequent disappointment which followed, I was sceptical about the how good *Captain America: Civil War* would actually be. Obviously, I was going to grumble about the ridiculous cost of the ticket and the film treats but (like so many others) I found myself in auto-pilot when it comes to marvel films and simply handing over the crisp notes!

I'm not saying that I had doubts about the film - it's Marvel - there was no way that the costumes and special FX were going to be of poor quality. However, I was unsure about how well the film would portray the ensemble of complicated characters and how accurate and believable their character development would be.

No spoilers, just entertainment!

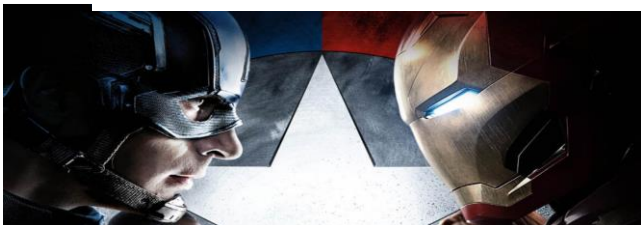
I was pleasantly surprised to find that the narrative itself was actually really well constructed and scripted. The plot flowed, and each scene had relevance to the overall sequence of the film (not something that can always be seen in franchise movies). There was a somewhat unnecessary love interest, but if you exclude this each character had a valid part in contributing to the narrative's progression. What is undoubtedly difficult about such a large ensemble cast, is the risk of failing to do each character justice; as many critics chorus this risk did not pay off during *Age of Ultron*, so I was justifiably worried that it would happen again. However, each character was well-developed, and it was obvious to the audience were each stood in terms of the denouement.



I'm even going to go as far as to say that several of the characters had better development within 20 minutes of *Civil War* than they did in the previous two *Avenger* films. Furthermore, the successful addition of new characters added to the already established fan favourites. In fact the new additions even enhanced the film enabling it to become, what Dan Jolin believes to be, "*Marvel Studios' finest film yet*".

On the other hand, however, many have been keen to criticise what they believe to be a dismissal title character. It has been well hashed out that this *Civil War* is a *Captain America* film, and therefore, should be centred on Captain America himself. Many have argued that *Civil War* is more like a third *Avengers* film than the final film in the *Captain America* trilogy. And while it appears to be that way (much press and promotion is centred on the entire cast) it is evident that once you have seen the film that it is, at heart, a film about Steve Rogers with all of the additional elements that make a great Marvel film.

At the end of the day, no one can argue that Marvel films aren't entertaining. Audiences are more than willing to spend their cold hard cash on them. However, previous questionable and disappointing movies from the franchise have meant that some fans set the bar reasonably low for *Civil War*. Consequently, they are going to be pleasantly surprised. It was enjoyable and would definitely recommend sacrificing the proverbial arm, leg or small mortgage it costs to go and see it!



In, out, shake it all about

Written for the students, by the students

In the recent months, the media seems to have focused on the subject of the EU and essentially, the battle the 'In or Out?' It is impossible to pick up a newspaper, watch TV, or use social media without being bombarded by facts and figures about how the upcoming referendum will affect YOU.

Both camps fight for media spotlight, both camps have the clout of national newspapers behind them and both camps appear to feature similarly emotive words like: threat, desperate, blitz and crisis in the headlines. It seems that every forum is being used to ensure that battle lines are drawn and sides are trying to determine how best to secure the majority vote of the EU referendum on 23rd June.

With major political parties themselves divided, it is even harder to make any sense of this mayhem; on the one hand you're told that leaving the EU will make you x-amounts richer every week, but on the other you're being told that remaining part of Europe will protect your rights. The question of Europe has been something to divide people. For the Tories in particular the divisions regarding the EU have been felt since Britain first joined the European Community in 1973. So, why are we getting a vote on it now and what the hell does any of it actually mean?

As a loud and proud Leftie, I have spent a lot of time thinking about what I believe is right answer. I admit, unlike many questions posed by the ruling elite, I didn't have an immediate response to this one. Referendums are often awkward for socialists like me; both sides of the debate are created by politicians who don't always appear to have the best interests of the people at heart. Therefore, the EU debate is especially tricky as the central arguments for both sides are somewhat unpalatable. I think Joseph Choonara of the *Socialist Review* puts it best: *"On one side we will face calls to support big business, on the other a little-Englander campaign steeped in racism towards immigrants."*

Honestly, my knee-jerk reaction was to leave. The EU is hugely undemocratic. It is not an organisation for the people but for the business – a principle I am wholly against. However, then I started to think a little more. If Britain were to leave, what would it really mean? The answer, of course, is that no one really knows, but I can have a good guess. To start with, leaving one bureaucratic club would only mean the formation of another. The capitalist system requires bankers and ruling minority to be 'in this together' thereby ensuring a free market - only this time it would be dangerously patriotic as well as undemocratic and all very British, with a capital B!

With this in mind I realised that our border controls were really the only deciding factor for me. If we were to leave the EU and close our borders surely attitudes about 'keeping Britain British' would only intensify. Rather than welcoming our fellow people, whose only crime was to be born abroad, or helping desperate refugees, whose lives have been torn apart by a war they had no part in making, we would turn our backs and say 'they are not our problem.'

Well, I say they are. The EU may not be my cup of tea but after careful consideration I have realised that leaving is a lot more dangerous than remaining. The question of Europe is not one that affects people on the streets; if we are in today and out tomorrow, it makes no difference to you or me. However, I will not stand by and watch silently as people are turned away from a better life in Britain because as a nation we decided that because we are an island that we are better than everyone else.



Crafting Creativity

Written for the students, by the students

Creative feature writer, Rudy Farrell, is back. This month he walks us through a graveyard to Abuela's grave.

In Loving Memory

A constant buzzing of crickets filled the air; they seemed louder, more disturbed than the night previous. The roads were empty; nothing was out that night except for the silhouettes of three young boys, riding into the Mallorca countryside. The tallest boy had a large scar on his forehead; his dark chestnut hair hid it slightly from sight.

As the boys entered a ragged country lane, a foreboding sense of doom fell upon them. The road was filled with potholes and the trees were hunched like a withered old man. The boys were frightened and feared the worst but, they had come for a reason - they would not be perturbed. Abandoning their bikes, they began on foot.

The birds' demented screeching was enough to send a shiver down even a dead man's spine. The boys were on their yearly pilgrimage to visit their Abuela's grave... A mission they could not abandon, even if every instinct in their small bodies told them to turn back, that danger lay just ahead.

The smallest boy was distracted by a faint rustling coming from the distance. He adjusted his glasses and squinted into the darkness to see what had made this noise. The moon gave an iridescent and phantom glow reinforcing the eerie mood and tone of the evening. As the boys neared the churchyard they come to a cross roads where a dilapidated shack greeted them with an hospitable notice that "Trespassers beware!"

The boys headed left and ever closer to the church where they would place their pale pink roses on Abuela's grave. As gate to the church was rusty and hard to open; however, they opened it with a familiar precision. Fear greeted the boys. Quickly, they turned their heads to face them but were incapable to speak; all they could do was point at a tall skeletal man dressed in a monk's cloak carrying a dagger by his side. He stood with a sinister smile across his face. He began to walk over to the boys. Instinctively, the eldest boy grabbed his brothers pushed them back towards safety.

They scrambled through the gate in panic, their hearts pounding. The eldest boy looked back over his shoulder, but, to his horror he discovered his middle sibling was no longer with them. Instead, his brother was walking towards the monk. He watched in confusion as his brother spoke to the twisted figure, bent on one knee and presented his grandmother's flowers to the monk.



Why I love... Art.

Written for the students, by the students

This month we thought we would continue the theme of creativity and ask the Year 7s and Year 8s why they loved their Art lessons.



"I love Art, it's one of the only times that I can really be creative. Our teacher encourages us to be independent and to experiment with colour." Claire, Year 7.

"It is really inspiring to see all of the work around the school. It makes me want paint like that. I'll definitely take Art for an option." Sam, Year 7.

"Art is great. I like all my lessons, but Art is definitely my favourite. I can work quietly and watch the picture come to life." Ben, Year 8.

"It is really nice to be able to just sit and draw. It's like being little again, but now I learn all about perspective and colours." David, Year 8.

"My Art teacher is great. I really look forward to the lessons because there is always something really different to do and learn." Chloe, Year 8.

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The Definite Article

This month we caught up with wonderboy and general legend, Mr Armstrong.



If you had to be a hero or villain which would it be and why? I think I would have to be a hero because I want the gratitude of saving the day. Plus, I'd win the damsel in distress; although, there is something appealing about being a villain.

Miaow or woof? Why? Tough one. I love both, but I prefer dogs. I like the loyalty that comes with dogs.

What is your most prized possession? I don't really own anything I couldn't live without. People think my phone, but I am not sure!

We all have one, so what is your regret? To be honest, I think I am too young to have made mistakes!

If you won £1,000,000 what would be your first purchase? A house in St Albans.

What subject did you find most challenging when you were at school? Business Studies; it was the only one I failed.

Trimphing can be tricky, what are you proudest of? Being able to hold the winning House cup up again for Mercury – it's all about team work.